

REMARKS

The Office Action dated August 4, 2003 has been received and carefully noted. The following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto. Claims 1-16 are pending in this application with claims 1, 8, 13, and 16 being amended. No new matter is presented. In the outstanding Office Action, claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). Claims 1-12 were allowed. Claims 14-16 have been indicated to contain allowable subject matter. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicants request the reconsideration of claims 1-16.

35 U.S.C. 102(e)

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being unpatentable over Ozawa et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0063335). The Office Action takes the position that Ozawa teaches and/or suggests all features recited in claim 13.

Applicants respectfully note that Ozawa was filed on November 28, 2001. The present application has a priority date of June 5, 2001. The enclosed verified-translation of the Japanese Priority document is submitted to perfect Applicants priority date. Since the present application has a perfected priority date prior to the filing date of the applied reference, the applied reference has been removed as prior art. Thus, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e).

Claim Amendments – Allowed Claims

Claims 1, 8, and 16 are amended. No new matter is presented. Claims 1, 8, and 16 are amended to improve the readability of the claimed invention. Therefore, the amendments to claims 1, 8, and 16 are merely cosmetic in nature and do not affect the scope of the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully request the favorable reconsideration of claims 1, 8, and 16.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 14-16 were objected to for depending upon rejected claim 13. In view of the above remarks and the submission of the verified translation of the Japanese Priority document, Applicants request the withdrawal of the objection to claims 14 and-16.

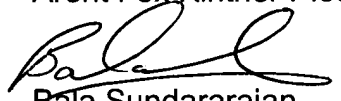
Conclusion

Applicants' remarks and the submission of the verified translation of the priority document overcome the rejection of claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). Claims 1, 8, and 16 are amended to improve the readability of the claims. In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and allowance claims 1-16.

Should the Examiner believe the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The Commissioner is authorized to charge payment for any additional fees, which may be required with respect to this paper to Counsel's Deposit Account 01-2300.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures: Petition for Extension of Time
Certified English Translation of Japanese Application 2001-169010